

It's Smart To Be Gallery Wise!

THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART

AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

NEWSFLASHES

October 1,

1936

LOAN EXHIBITION OF YOUNG AMERICAN PAINTERS: An important, specially assembled exhibition of American Paintings will be shown in the central galleries, opening on Sunday, September 27th and continuing until October 28th. Devoted largely to the younger artists with a Middle West background who have achieved nation-wide success, it will have an especial appeal to the many out-of-town visitors who will be attracted to Kansas City for the dedication of the Municipal Auditorium and to the American Royal Show. Built around two one-man shows of the work of Doris Lee and Joe Jones, most of the artists will be seen in Kansas City for the first time.

The center of interest will be Doris Lee who was formerly a student at the Kansas City Art Institute and who in recent years has created a very individual and popular style. She was born in Illinois and in addition to several years in Paris, has worked with Ernest Lawson and Arnold Blanch. She has exhibited in all the important shows in the past few years, but it was last fall in Chicago when her "Thanksgiving Dinner" won first prize that interest was focused on her work. This painting was most widely discussed, some found it a valid expression of America of today, others said it was not art but mere illustration. Its gay, lively humour, however, found many admirers. Miss Lee has a definite ability to paint and a fresh, pleasing colour sense. Added to this are a keen observation of life about her and a refreshing and kindly wit that have caused her to be called 20th century Currier and Ives. She rarely turns to the city for inspiration, and her canvases depict rural scenes, haystacks, animals, the pastoral delights. Her paintings are never static, there is a vivacity and compelling movement that immediately arrests our attention. She has had several one-man shows in New York, her canvases are owned by important museums and she has been commissioned to make a mural for one of the Federal Buildings in Washington. She sums up her own approach to the paintings thus, "What I feel, is a sort of violence".

More serious, more solid, if less clever, is the work of Joe Jones, who was born in St. Louis and who is almost entirely self-taught. He followed the trade of his father, house painting, then decided to become an artist and immediately won attention by his entirely original expression of the life he found about him. To him it is not pretty, it is dramatic and portent with tragedy, and he paints in sombre colours, with an undercurrent of hard toil, want and privation. "I am not interested in painting pretty pictures to match pink and blue walls, I want to paint things that will knock holes in the walls". Lately he has turned from the city to his native wheat fields, working in them with the farmers and painting them both. His contact with nature has lightened his colours, but there is still his fine composition and his dramatic approach. Young, ambitious, he is one of the most interesting figures on the horizon of American painting.

Paul Sample, a native of Kentucky and a pupil of Jonas Lie, started painting after the war. He has no European background, but strangely enough considers Breughel his favorite painter. He is definitely an American and paints the life of small communities, miners and circus folk that he sees with a personal and often humorous eye. He has developed a very original and individual technique, drawing in his subject matter meticulously, then painting it over thinly and carefully. His fine sense of patterned design and almost symmetrical composition is well shown in "Miners Resting" which was awarded a medal at the Pennsylvania Academy show last winter. He has summed up his approach to painting. "I have no particular theories about painting. I detest imitative painting, but at the same time, complete abstractions leave me without a quiver. Pieter Breughel the elder is my favorite painter of all times. I have never been to Europe except during the war and have no desire to go there to study or paint, but I would like to see the old masters".

An Iowan artist who was born in Cedar Rapids, is David McCosh, who is of the Grant Wood tradition and paints western landscapes with a rich, vibrant palette. There is a fine rhythm in his canvases and a definite knowledge of the animals and the country that he paints. Almost the youngest member of the exhibition is Dudley Morris whose very evident talent has matured in a short time. His landscapes are beautiful in colour and there is always a pleasing undulating movement across the canvas. Also still in his twenties is Daniel Celentano who paints very trenchant and graphic comments on New York life, particularly of the Italian quarter which he knows so well. Virginia Berresford has developed a most personal idiom which she uses for mountains, flowers and undersea life, which at times she treats almost as abstractions of cool, clear colours. An early follower of Georgia O'Keeffe, she has succeeded in achieving a purely individual style which is highly decorative and is marked by a strange and haunting appeal. More traditional is Molly Luce who has only recently found herself after several years in Italy and France. She is a fine draughtsman and fills her ample landscape with Breughel-like figures. Her paintings are in the Whitney Museum, the Metropolitan, and in a number of private collections.

Three artists whose names and works are familiar to Kansas Citians are Grant Wood, Luigi Lucioni, and Clarence Carter, all having been included here in previous exhibitions. John Heliker, born in 1909 in New York State, has attracted comment recently since his discovery by eastern critics. He is shy, retiring, and except for three months study at the Art Students' League under Benton, is self-taught. Andrée Ruellan is of French parentage, has studied in Paris and New York, and first exhibited her work at the age of seven years. Others to be shown are Paul Benjamin, Antoinette Schulte, Russell Cheney, Hobson Pittman, and Manuel Tolegian, all of whom are receiving favorable attention from recent exhibitions and whose work is finding its way into important collections.

The exhibition will be an interesting and enlightening comment on what the younger generation of painters is doing. All the artists included have had one-man shows in New York and have been seen in all the important national exhibitions of recent years. Without exception their expression is purely American and gives us high hope for our future.

BROCKHURST PRINTS: The Print Club of Kansas City will inaugurate its program for the season by sponsoring an exhibition of the prints of Gerald Leslie Brockhurst, one of the most popular of the contemporary English etchers. Opening on October 15th and continuing until November 15th, it will include sixty of his finest plates and will be hung in Galleries XIII, XV, and XVI.

Brockhurst entered the Birmingham School of Art when only twelve, and the story is told that the headmaster, Edward Taylor, rushed excitedly into a faculty meeting with the news that he had discovered a young Botticelli, after seeing the first work of the boy. He made extraordinary progress there and soon won all the prizes and scholarships and repeated this remarkable record when later he went to London. While his paintings of this early period, which are influenced also by da Vinci and Piero della Francesca, are little known and we think of him primarily as an etcher, it is true that few artists since Botticelli have equalled his mastery of the flowing line of the Florentine.

Until 1914, Brockhurst had never touched an etching needle, and he has never received a single lesson in this medium, yet it is in this field that his reputation has been made. There has been a continuous development, always directed towards the same end, a minute and delicate completeness of finish, for which he stands alone. His textures have never been surpassed and his mastery of the technique is little short of wizardry. He can differentiate the soft web of hair and the texture of skin with the richness of velvet and satin as no one ever has with the needle. And all is done so effortlessly, so unobtrusively, that even with a magnifying glass we cannot follow the method by which he has built up his plates. Marked with an idealistic, a romantic beauty that is reminiscent of the Pre-Raphaelites, many of his etchings record the highly personal charm of his Basque wife. The command of his medium which he has achieved, may be considered unique today.

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CHINESE WOODBLOCKS: A very important department of Chinese art, that of the woodblock and illustrated book, which has been unfortunately neglected by many Western museums, will be featured in a special exhibition in Gallery XXIV for the month of October. Too often we have allowed the more delicate charm of this art to be overshadowed by the more brilliant and obvious Japanese Prints.

The Chinese were perhaps the first people to practise the art of printing from wooden blocks, and it is a process they have made most definitely their own. Examples are known from the T'ang Dynasty and while illustrated books using this technique must have been made all through the centuries, the best known ones that have come down to us today date from the 17th century. Two of this period are outstanding, the "Ten Bamboo Studio" and the "Mustard Seed Garden". The "Ten Bamboo Studio" was composed of sixteen volumes and contained compositions of birds, orchids, flowers, and fruit. In its early editions, it represents the best colour block printing which has been produced in China. Among the loveliest of its prints are those inspired by the fantastic, weather-worn volcanic rocks which grace every Chinese garden.

"The Mustard Seed Garden" was originally intended as a manual for artists and contains reproductions of ancient paintings, flowers, birds, and human figures. More pretentious and less successful than the "Studio", its early editions again are complete expressions of the mastery of colour shading and graded modulations that convey such vitality and life to the prints. They are fascinating with their delicate, ephemeral beauty, and it is a regret that so few of them have been preserved. We feel fortunate in being able to present a representative group.

MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH: Our Tapestry Woven Polonaise Rug, which has a most distinguished pedigree, will be featured as the Masterpiece of the Month for October. Woven in Persia in the first quarter of the 17th century, it is one of the finest ever to come from the looms of that country and is remarkable also for its perfect state.

The Persian weaves of the 16th and 17th centuries excelled in two types of so-called Polonaise Rugs, the distinctively Oriental knotted version of which our great example in the Persian Gallery is the most superb in this country, and the centuries old tapestry weave to which class the Masterpiece belongs. It is unique in the great amount of gold and silver threads that have been used, and fortunately which have not tarnished. Combined with these precious metals are brilliant salmons, greens, many blues, and rich magenta reds, all worked into a central medallion with floral scrolls, palmettes, and a pair of panthers attacking deers.

Formerly in the famous Dragonetti Collection, it has been shown at Detroit, Chicago, and last summer was featured in the great summer exhibition of Persian Rugs and Textiles at the Metropolitan Museum.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LECTURES: The Gallery will reopen for Wednesday Evenings on October 21st, when again there will be no admission charge either to the collections or for the lecture in the Atkins Auditorium.

The first lecture of the season, which will be given that evening by Mr. Sickman, will be devoted to several of the young American painters who are included in the October Loan Exhibition. Among the artists whom Mr. Sickman will discuss are David McCosh, Dudley Morris, Virginia Berresford, Molly Luce, and Daniel Celentano. It was found last year that some of the most popular lectures were those at which the paintings were brought down from the galleries to the auditorium, and this method of discussion will be used in this first talk. There will be a great interest in the work of these young Americans, and it is hoped a large group will assemble to hear their backgrounds and their work discussed.

On the following Wednesday Evening, October 28th, the same type of discussion will be held when Mr. Wittmann will speak on the paintings of Doris Lee and Joe Jones. Again the paintings will be brought

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to the auditorium to make the lecture more comprehensive and more interesting. Both Lee and Jones will be represented by a large enough number of paintings to enable one to judge their work fairly completely.

FRIENDS OF ART: The regular Study Classes for the members of the Friends of Art will not start until after the return of the Director, Mr. Gardner, in November. However, a special meeting will probably be held during October in order that all members may see the important group of American Paintings. A notice as to the date and time of this meeting will be mailed to members.

SATURDAY CLASSES FOR CHILDREN: The winter term of Saturday morning classes for children will begin on October 3rd and the enthusiastic enrollment promises an active season. The enrollment will be limited to four hundred children and registrations will be taken until the various classes are filled. The only charge is a registration fee of \$1.00 and the following activities will be offered: Marionettes, for children over ten; Advanced Marionettes, a limited class for children thirteen or over who have worked in the class before; Indian crafts and Indian Lore, ages nine to fifteen years; General Crafts, eight to ten years; Clay Modeling, over ten years; Textiles, over ten years; four Sketch groups for ages eight to fourteen years; and an Activities Group, which is an introductory class for children from seven to fourteen years who have never attended Gallery classes before.

In addition, there will be a free story hour on Saturday afternoon, at two o'clock. This is a new activity for the Gallery and all children who are interested are invited to come. It is not necessary to enroll for this class.

SIXTH AND SEVENTH GRADE ACTIVITIES: The series of demonstration-tours for school children of the sixth grades will begin on October 6th. The first subject to be studied will be sculpture and will be followed by lessons on the technique and history of painting, tapestry weaving, and stained and blown glass and pottery.

The first of the seventh grade tours for the study of the American Wing and American Painting will be on October 8th.

GALLERY LECTURES: The new series of Gallery Lectures announced in the news letter last month will begin on Thursday, October 1st. There is no additional charge to join these, and interested visitors will meet the lecturer in the designated Gallery at two o'clock. As has been stated, these will cover a more or less special field, the examples on exhibition will be augmented by objects from storage and it is hoped that they can be conducted on an informal basis with general discussion. The schedule for October is as follows:

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| Thurs., Oct. | 1 - American Glass | Miss Jackson |
| Fri., " | 2 - Chinese Porcelain | Mr. Sickman |
| Tues., " | 6 - Masterpiece of Month | Miss Hughes |
| Wed., " | 7 - Loan Exhibition | Mr. Wittmann |
| Thurs., " | 8 - American Wing | Miss Jackson |
| Fri., " | 9 - Sung Pottery | Mr. Sickman |
| Tues., " | 13 - Oriental Rugs | Miss Hughes |
| Wed., " | 14 - Classical Art | Mr. Wittmann |
| Thurs., " | 15 - American Portraits | Miss Jackson |
| Fri., " | 16 - Chinese Bronzes | Mr. Sickman |
| Tues., " | 20 - Tapestries | Miss Hughes |
| Wed., " | 21 - Brockhurst Prints | Mr. Wittmann |
| Thurs., " | 22 - Renaissance Textiles | Miss Jackson |
| Fri., " | 23 - American Indian Weaving | Mr. Ellis |
| Tues., " | 27 - Persian Pottery | Miss Hughes |
| Wed., " | 28 - European Painting | Mr. Wittmann |
| Thurs., " | 29 - American Indian Pottery and Baskets | Mr. Ellis |
| Fri., " | 30 - English Pottery | Mr. Sickman |

